

4/28/69

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

**SUBJECT: Lin Piao Report to the Chinese Party Congress: Remarks
on Military Strategy and Nuclear War**

I attach for your information an evaluation of the nuclear and military aspects of the report to the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China delivered by Lin Piao on April 1.

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Lin Piao Report to the Chinese Party Congress: Remarks on Military Strategy and Nuclear War

Lin Piao's April 1 report to the Party Congress has been published. It is a long and detailed defense of the Maoist rationale, and of the need for continuing class warfare. It is addressed primarily to the ideological dispute with the USSR and to domestic affairs. Comments on foreign policy are confined to a ritual statement of Chinese objectives, at the back of the paper.

In discussing efforts by "U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism" to "isolate" China, Lin Piao makes the following statement:

"We must on no account relax our revolutionary vigilance because of victory and on no account ignore the danger of U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism launching a large-scale war of aggression. We must make full preparations, preparations against their launching a big war and against their launching a war at an early date, preparations against their launching a conventional war and against their launching a large-scale nuclear war. In short, we must be prepared. Chairman Mao said long ago we will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack. If they insist on fighting, we will keep them company and fight to the finish. The Chinese Revolution was won on the battlefield."

The language which Lin employed is similar to that which Chinese regularly use on such ceremonial occasions. Nothing else in the speech suggests that Lin really anticipates that war may be imminent, nor is there any other reference in his speech to China's military strategy or to nuclear war. Chinese leaders from Mao down have regularly referred in the past to the possibility that China might some day be subject to nuclear attack and they have regularly stated that China would repel such an attack.

It is perhaps noteworthy that, despite the fact that China is now developing a nascent nuclear capacity, Lin avoided any reference to Chinese use of nuclear weapons. The Chinese leadership undoubtedly recognizes that China faced with a nuclear attack by the US or USSR, its limited nuclear capability would not be a significant element in the war.

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The lack of current concern of the possibility of a Soviet attack is underlined by the Chinese treatment of the recent Soviet offer to negotiate border differences. Lin Biao mentioned that the Chinese are "considering" the Soviet offer, but he boasted of China's refusal to agree to discuss the situation with Kossygin by telephone, when the Soviets made such a suggestion on March 31. This attitude does not suggest concern at the possibility of an immediate attack.

The other foreign policy aspect of interest in Lin's speech was an endorsement of "revolutionary struggles" in Laos, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Palestine. The endorsement is more explicit and formal than heretofore, particularly with respect to Laos and Malaysia.

In sum, on the foreign policy side, the speech represented an affirmation and extension of China's current policies. It did not anywhere convey the sense of nervousness concerning impending hostilities, nor did it back down from any Chinese positions as a means of avoiding such hostilities.

There is no indication of military moves by the Chinese Communists currently underway to meet an immediate threat of war.

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